



# The Speed Trap

## THE PATTERN

*"If I slow down, I fall behind."*

## What's Underneath

Speed became your competitive advantage. You moved faster, decided quicker, accomplished more. The pace that got you here now feels impossible to escape. Slowing down isn't restful. It can be terrifying.

Your nervous system adapted to constant motion. Stillness feels like failure. Speed isn't just habit. It's core to your identity. And underneath it often lives a fear: without the motion, you might have to face something you've been outrunning.

## Where Else It Shows Up

### VACATION DYSFUNCTION

You need two days to stop feeling like you should be working, then two days of dread before returning. The middle might be okay, if you can stay off email.

### CONVERSATION PACE

You finish people's sentences, check your phone mid-conversation, or mentally draft your response while they're talking. Presence feels inefficient.

### DECISION PRESSURE

Quick decisions feel competent; deliberation feels weak. You've learned that speed signals confidence, even when the situation calls for patience.

### FUTURE FIXATION

Always planning the next thing: next quarter, next milestone, next chapter. The present is just a waypoint. Arriving anywhere feels temporary.

## What Helps

Create deliberate friction. One meal without devices. One morning without immediately checking messages. Not to prove anything, but to learn what speed has been helping you avoid.

Notice what arises when you slow down. Boredom? Anxiety? Grief? Speed might be protecting you from something. Once you know what that is, real rest becomes possible.

Your nervous system might need retraining, not just permission. Small, consistent practices can rebuild capacity for stillness. This isn't about stopping. It's about choosing your pace.

## Four Questions

No right answers. Just honest reflection for you to keep.

### ONE

*Think of the last time someone was still talking and you'd already decided what you were going to say. Not a meeting. Someone who wasn't being paid to be there.*

Whoever came to mind is who's been absorbing the pace.

### TWO

*Name a decision you made fast that you'd now make differently. Not a disaster. Just one you'd redo.*

You almost certainly didn't need weeks. The gap between the call you made and the one you wish you had might be the conversation you didn't make time for.

### THREE

*I'll rest when \_\_\_\_\_.*

Now go back a few years. You've finished that sentence before with something else in the blank, and you got there. The rest didn't come with it.

### FOUR

*Think of the person you know who is hardest to hurry. What do you make of them?*

Whatever you make of them is roughly what you assume people would make of you if you slowed down. Nobody has actually said it to you. You've been living as though they would.

Nobody is asking you to slow down as a way of life. The speed has been earning its keep, which is exactly why it's hard to look at. Slowing down doesn't mean you've lost your edge. It means you get to decide when to use it.

